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**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
Newport, R.I.**

**COUNTERING A CHINESE COERCIVE CAMPAIGN AGAINST TAIWAN**

**by**

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**Commander, United States Navy**

**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

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## **Abstract**

Rising tensions across the Taiwan Strait have increased the likelihood that China would use force in a crisis over the status of Taiwan.

This paper argues that a coercive campaign is the most likely manner in which China would use force to achieve its political goals. Chinese military doctrine and Taiwan's critical vulnerabilities are examined to assess how China might implement a coercive campaign.

In the event US forces are directed to intervene in such a conflict, the paper proposes a concept of operations which aims to deter escalation and to frustrate and exhaust Chinese efforts to isolate and coerce Taiwan.

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Figure 1. China, Taiwan and the Taiwan Strait<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CIA Factbook

## I. Introduction

It is policy of the United States ... to consider any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means, including by boycotts or embargoes, a threat to the peace and security of the Western Pacific area and of grave concern to the United States ... [and] to maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people on Taiwan.”<sup>2</sup>

– The Taiwan Relations Act of 1979

Today, the issue of Taiwan’s status is at a rolling boil.

On the Taiwanese side of the strait, President Chen Shui-bian has proclaimed “Taiwan is an independent, sovereign country. Taiwan is not part of China, nor a local government of the People’s Republic of China.”<sup>3</sup> He has denounced China’s Anti-succession Law. He has rejected the “One China” framework for talks with China. And, as if this isn’t provocative enough, he is organizing a referendum to petition for United Nations (UN) recognition under the name “Taiwan”.

On the mainland side of the strait, Chen’s “splittist” activities – in combination with China’s growing military might – is making it increasingly difficult for President Hu Jintao to resist using the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) to stop Taiwan’s piecemeal campaign for independence. Much is at stake. The People’s Republic of China (PRC) is already under tremendous strain arising from the widening gaps between the rich and poor, the urban and rural, the Han and ethnic minorities, the drive for development and looming environmental disaster. As difficult as these problems are, they are manageable. But the question of

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<sup>2</sup> Taiwan Relations Act of 1979. 22USC48 Section 3301. <http://uscode.house.gov/download/pls/22C4.txt> (all web notations accessed 3 November 2007)

<sup>3</sup> Chen Shui-bian. Quote and policy positions from a transcript of an interview with the New York Times on October 18, 2007 posted on the official Republic of China Ministry of Information website at <http://www.gio.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=34573&ctNode=2462&mp=807>

Taiwan is a question of regime survival.<sup>4</sup> A “loss” of Taiwan would likely bring the fall of Hu Jintao – and possibly the rule of the Communist Party with him.

In the past, the United States has been able to keep China from invading Taiwan by the use, threat or show of force. President Truman sent the Seventh Fleet to neutralize the Strait of Taiwan during the Korean War<sup>5</sup>. US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles hinted at the use of nuclear weapons on China, ending the First Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1954. Eisenhower enabled Taiwan to win air superiority and a cease-fire with US-provided AIM-9 Sidewinder missiles fitted on Taiwan’s F-86 Sabers during the Second Taiwan Crisis of 1958. Most recently, President Clinton dispatched the *Independence* and *Nimitz* Carrier Battlegroups to the area in response to China’s 1996 missile demonstration in advance of the Taiwanese election.

The days of US cowboy tactics are over. China’s newly developed military capability and its leaders’ rising frustration over Taiwan require the United States to adopt a more sophisticated approach to a cross-strait crisis.

If directed to intervene, the US strategy to counter a Chinese coercive campaign against Taiwan should have two components. The first component is to deter China from escalating. This should be accomplished by moving and preparing forces to counter any escalatory moves by China with a decisive use of force. The second component is to frustrate and exhaust Chinese efforts to isolate and coerce Taiwan. This should be accomplished through a multifaceted effort of active resistance operations.

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<sup>4</sup> Susan L. Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 183.

<sup>5</sup> John L. Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 77-78.

In this paper, I will examine why China would choose a coercive campaign, evaluate the likely features of a coercive campaign and will propose an operational scheme for a US response to a coercive campaign.

## **II. Coercive Campaign - China's Preferred Military Option**

As events unfold across the strait, China's military options can be divided into three broad categories:

<i>Demonstrations</i>	Distinct military actions, restricted in time, space and force, designed to convey a political message.
<i>Coercive campaign</i>	Prolonged use of force to achieve a limited political objective.
<i>Invasion</i>	Use of force to achieve the unlimited political objective of destroying the enemy's military and overturning the civil authority.

Of these options, it is likely that demonstrations, such as the Lianhe-2007 PLA exercise simulating an assault on Taiwan, will continue to occur over time. Though disturbing, the message of such demonstrations is targeted at internal Chinese audience as much as – or more than – Taiwan and the US. Publicly ignoring such demonstrations, or at the most issuing a measured diplomatic statement that such provocations are unhelpful, is appropriate.

At the other end of the spectrum, a bolt-out-of-the-blue invasion of Taiwan is possible but unlikely. Success of such an invasion would be far from certain. The Chinese have limited amphibious lift and air assault capability and lack joint training and exercises on large-scale amphibious landings. The US ability to surge naval and air forces to interdict PLA amphibious forces at sea and to attack any shore lodgments that are achieved, along with substantial Taiwanese defenses, make prospects of Chinese success appear grim. Moreover, such an invasion would risk uncontrolled horizontal and vertical escalation,



including regional war against the US, Japan and South Korea, and possibly even a nuclear exchange. Alternatively, an embarrassing failure of the invading force could lead to turmoil within China and the unseating of the Chinese Communist Party.

In the event that China determines that it is no longer able to manage the issue of Taiwan through pronouncements and military demonstrations, the most likely “next step” is for China to employ coercive campaign against Taiwan.

Hu Jintao’s statement to the CCP Central Committee and Central Military Commission regarding Chen’s UN Referendum supports the analysis that a blockade would be the next step in military escalation. In this meeting, Hu “proposed five steps for the CPC armed forces’ military action against Taiwan: First is making military combat readiness; second is conducting military deterrence; third is imposing a blockade on the Taiwan Strait; fourth is carrying out combined firepower attacks; and fifth is cross-sea landing.”<sup>6</sup>

### **III. Likely Features of a Chinese Coercive Campaign**

To identify the likely features of a Chinese coercive campaign against Taiwan, I will examine Chinese doctrinal writings and then conduct “Red-Team”<sup>7</sup> analysis to identify Taiwan’s critical vulnerabilities which China would likely seek to exploit and propose a “Best Red” force posture to conduct a coercive campaign.

#### **A. Chinese Doctrine**

The *Science of Campaigns [Zhanyixue]*, the textbook used at China’s National Defense University to instruct staff officers in operational-level warfare, provides the most authoritative PLA doctrinal source available in open sources on the conduct of a coercive

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<sup>6</sup> Lien-Ho Pao. “Hu Jintao Says the Only Task of the CPC Armed Forces Is To Launch War Against Taiwan,” udn.com (August 27, 2007) <http://udn.com/NEWS/mainpage.shtml> The author opined that if Chen’s UN referendum wins a majority, the Communist Central Party “will at least consider taking the second step – conducting military deterrence, namely, military exercise.”

<sup>7</sup> “Red Team” analysis is a deliberate effort to evaluate a situation from the enemy’s perspective.

campaign. “Joint Blockade Campaigns” is the subject of one chapter and is one of the three joint campaigns presented. A Joint Blockade Campaign is “implemented under a unified intention and command, in order to sever enemy economic and military connections with the outside world.”<sup>8</sup>

The text addresses six characteristics of a Joint Blockade Campaign. These characteristics include: Campaign decision-making and activities are subject to multiple policy-related constraints, operational intensity is relatively low and requires protracted sustainment, non-combat military activities such as boarding, seizure and confiscation are prominent, dispersion of forces causes offensive and defensive roles to be intertwined, command and control is particularly challenging, and operational challenges necessitate timely and reliable intelligence, communication, and logistic support. Additionally, the text discusses the likely interference from a third party power, the requirements of international law related to blockades, and an imperative to closely coordinate military actions with political, diplomatic and economic struggles. Finally, to prevent the situation from becoming drawn-out and not decisive, certain operations should be quickly fought and quickly decided.<sup>9</sup>

The first phase of a Joint Blockade Campaign is the unfolding of the campaign by rapidly deploying forces to establish the blockade.<sup>10</sup>

The second phase is to seize campaign dominance in the areas of information, air, and sea. Information dominance includes technical reconnaissance and jamming, offensive operations to gather and control information about the enemy while denying him information

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<sup>8</sup> Zhang Yulang, *The Science of Campaigns [Zhanyixue]*. (Beijing: National Defense University Press, May 2006) , 292.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 292-294.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 297.

about friendly forces through cover and deception, and defensive operations aimed at preventing the enemy from conducting reconnaissance, jamming and denial of use attacks. Air dominance includes establishing air superiority and conducting air-to-ground strikes to destroy enemy airfields and air defenses. Sea dominance is achieved by first destroying ocean-based enemy forces using ships, submarines and planes focusing on destroying enemy surface-based anti-submarine forces, ship formations, counter-mining forces and submarine forces. Following this, enemy naval ports and bases are to be blockaded using mines and shipwrecks, missile and air strikes, and attacks by submarines and surface warships on ships near the port and in shipping lanes. The final phase of establishing sea dominance is assaulting enemy military ports using missiles and bombardment to annihilate the enemy naval ships and infrastructure.<sup>11</sup>

The third phase of a Joint Blockade Campaign is to conduct a sustained blockade by extending the blockade out from the ports to interdict anti-blockade forces using mines, obstacles, submarines and missiles strikes. Joint forces will strike enemy forces as they form convoys and in locations where the enemy has made a local penetration. Surface navy forces will implement a regime of monitoring, boarding seizing vessels at sea. Additionally, air and air defense forces will intercept and expel aircraft entering the blockade area.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, when the political objective has been achieved, the fourth phase will see forces re-deploy in an orderly manner while guarding against counter-attack.<sup>13</sup>

## **B. Taiwan's Critical Vulnerabilities**

In waging a coercive campaign, China seeks to attack Taiwan's strategic center of gravity – the will of the Taiwanese people to assert sovereignty and independence – using an

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 297-303

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 303- 308

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 309

indirect attack on Taiwan's strategic vulnerabilities. By applying "Red Team" analysis three categories of critical vulnerabilities are identified: Taiwan's Navy and Air Force, Taiwan's sea and air commerce, and Taiwan's physical infrastructure.

**Taiwan's Navy, Air Force and Missile Forces.** An attack on these portions of Taiwan's military is an excellent avenue for China to undermine Taiwan's sovereignty. These assets are highly visible symbols of Taiwan's claim of nationhood. More importantly, these forces provide the first line of defense and the counter-strike capability which are central to Taiwan's "All-out Defense" policy of "effective deterrence, resolute defense."<sup>14</sup>

Attacking Taiwan's navy, air and missile forces may be accomplished by precision strikes or by holding them hostage in their own garrisons. The latter option is feasible if China directs Taiwan to return to and remain in garrison and threatens to use its long-range strike capabilities to destroy any non-compliant forces.

The PLA has the capability to conduct strikes against the Taiwanese Navy by striking moored ships with Short Range Ballistic Missiles (SRBMs) or ships at sea using anti-ship Air-launched Cruise Missiles (ALCMs), land-based Coastal-Defense Cruise Missiles (CDCMs), surface-warship launched Anti-Ship Cruise Missiles (ASCMs) or submarine launched ASCMs and torpedoes.

The PLA also has the capability to conduct strikes against the Taiwanese Air force using SRBMs aimed at aircraft on the ground and runways, by engaging Taiwanese aircraft with land-based and sea-based Surface to Air Missiles (SAMs), or by engaging in air-to-air combat.

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<sup>14</sup> Ministry of Defense of the ROC, *2006 National Defense Report*. (April 2006), Ch. 5.I.4.

Similarly, the PLA could conduct SRBM strikes against Taiwan's counter-strike missiles and air and missile defense SAMs.

**Taiwan's Sea and Air Commerce.** Taiwan economy is dependent on the uninterrupted flow of goods by sea and air. Though the vast majority of Taiwan's commerce travels by sea, small, high-value electronic components are routinely flown to assembly plants to meet urgent deadlines of just-in-time manufacturing supply chains. A disruption in Taiwan's sea and air commerce would deal a devastating blow to Taiwan's economy, providing substantial leverage for China to coerce Taiwan.

An attack on Taiwan's sea and air commerce could range from a selective interdiction of a particular commodity or the comprehensive blockade of all commercial trade. Key areas of vulnerability include: Oil, coal and Liquid Natural Gas (LNG), food, manufacturing materials and exports, and trans-shipment.

*Oil, coal and LNG.* Taiwan is almost completely dependent on imported fossil fuels. In 2006, 91.2% of Taiwan's energy supply came from imported oil, coal and LNG.<sup>15</sup>

In 2005, oil imports amounted to over 800,000 barrels per day (bbl/d) and imports of 973,000 bbl/d were projected for 2006.<sup>16</sup> In 2005 domestic production was a mere 7,910 bbl/d of oil.

In 2004, Taiwan imported 62.9 million short tons of coal, supplying 32% of its energy needs. Of this, 41% of the imported coal was supplied by China, 32% by Indonesia, and 21% by Australia. Taiwan produces no coal domestically. 77% of the coal imported was used for electrical power generation.

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<sup>15</sup> Bureau of Energy, Ministry of Economic Affairs, ROC. <http://www.moeaboe.gov.tw/English/statistics.asp>

<sup>16</sup> Energy Information Administration, *Taiwan Country Analysis Brief* (September 2006) <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Taiwan/Full.html>. Unless otherwise cited, statistics in the remainder of the statistics in the section on oil, coal and LNG come from this report.

Taiwan's refinery capacity exceeds its domestic consumption, making it a net exporter of petroleum products. It has 1.2 million bbl/d refining capacity at four facilities in Kao Hsiung, Ta Lin, Tau Yuan and Mailia, with more capacity being built.

In 2004, Taiwan imported 332 billion cubic feet of LNG, comprising 7.4% of Taiwan's energy supply.<sup>17</sup> LNG was almost exclusively supplied by Indonesia and Malaysia (58% and 39% respectively) under long-term contracts. LNG is predominantly used for electrical generation, industrial processes and consumer use.

In 2004, Taiwan had 33.3 gigawatts of installed electrical generation capacity and generated 173 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity. Of this, 74% was generated from fossil fuel, 22% from nuclear power and 4% hydroelectric. Three nuclear power plants are in operation and a fourth is under construction.

In 2006, energy consumption by sector was: 50.7% industry, 15.2% Transportation, 12.0% residential, 6.6% energy, 6.2% commercial and 8.1% other.<sup>18</sup>

As this survey of Taiwan's energy sector indicates, Taiwan is quite vulnerable to an interruption in its energy supply, providing another key lever for China to coerce Taiwan.

*Food.* Taiwan is a net importer of food, raw materials and manufactured products. In 2005, 5.2% of Taiwan's imports (by value) were agricultural products.<sup>19</sup> In 2006, the port of Kao Hsiung, Taiwan's largest bulk-goods handling port by a factor of four over Chi Lung, imported 299,801 metric tons (MT) of wheat and barley, 869,420 MT of soybeans, and

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<sup>17</sup> Bureau of Energy, Ministry of Economic Affairs, ROC. <http://www.moeaboe.gov.tw/English/statistics.asp>

<sup>18</sup> Bureau of Energy, Ministry of Economic Affairs, ROC. <http://www.moeaboe.gov.tw/English/statistics.asp>

<sup>19</sup> World Trade Organization Statistical Database, *Chinese Taipei*.  
<http://stat.wto.org/CountryProfile/WSDBCountryPFView.aspx?Language=E&Country=TW>

2,145,963 MT of miscellaneous groceries.<sup>20</sup> This equates to roughly 317 pounds of food for each of Taiwan's 23 million residents.

*Manufacturing Raw Materials and Exports.* Taiwan's economy is highly dependent on trade. In 2005, Taiwan ranked 16 in the world in both export and import of goods. In 2006, its GDP was US\$346 billion, with exports of US\$224 billion and imports of US\$202 billion; of this, a full 75% (by value) of imports were agricultural and industrial raw materials and 32% (by value) of exports were electronic, communications and information products.<sup>21</sup>

In terms of volume, industrial goods imported through Kao Hsiung in 2006 include 3,337,529 MT of chemicals, 14,478,960 MT of metal ore, 1,382,821 MT of scrap iron, 1,395,730 MT of non-metallic minerals, 3,219,198 MT of limestone and 734,616 MT of cement.<sup>22</sup>

Of note, in 2005, China was Taiwan's 3<sup>rd</sup> largest source of imports at 11.0% by value and its top export recipient accounting for 37.8% by value.<sup>23</sup> This reflects a tight supply chain relationship between Taiwan and China in which precision components are manufactured in Taiwan and then exported to China for final assembly.

*Transshipment.* In 2005, the Port of Kao Hsiung was the sixth largest port in the world in terms of Twenty-foot Equivalent (TEUs) shipping containers are handled.<sup>24</sup> Of the container cargo handled at the Port of Kao Hsiung, 52% is transshipped.<sup>25</sup> This

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<sup>20</sup> Port of Kao Hsiung, *Annual Statistical Report, 2006*, table 13.

<http://www.khb.gov.tw/File/bussBody/6/6-5-3.xls>

<sup>21</sup> Council for Economic Planning and Development, ROC, *Taiwan Economic Statistics – Current Economic Situation: Briefing, September 2007*. <http://www.cepd.gov.tw/encontent/dn.aspx?uid=4512>

<sup>22</sup> Port of Kao Hsiung, *Annual Statistical Report, 2006*, table 13.

<sup>23</sup> World Trade Organization Statistical Database, *Chinese Taipei*.

<sup>24</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ “Rotterdam Port to Outpace Kaohsiung”, *Taipei Times*, (October 11, 2007), 12. <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/biz/archives/2007/10/11/2003382702>

<sup>25</sup> Port of Kao Hsiung, *Newsletter*, (April 2004).

transshipment business and would likely migrate to other regional ports in the event of a conflict in Taiwan.

**Physical Infrastructure.** Taiwan's physical infrastructure is relatively vulnerable to attack. Key infrastructure vulnerabilities include port location, refineries, electrical generation and distribution, and underwater fiber-optic cables.

Taiwan's main ports, Kao Hsiung and Chi Lung, along with the majority of second-tier ports are located on the West or North shore of the Taiwan, making ships calling in these ports more vulnerable to interdiction. In addition to these ports, all of which have narrow channel openings to keep out current and weather, are two major off-shore bulk petroleum handling facilities located the Taiwan Strait, one located to the Southwest of Kao Hsiung and the other to the West of Shalun (near Taipei). These facilities could be attacked by missiles or, alternatively, ships offloading their cargoes could be struck by mines or lurking submarines. Of note, the ports of Suao and Hualien on the East coast of Taiwan are less vulnerable to Chinese interdiction.

Virtually all refined petroleum product (gas, oil, asphalt, petrochemicals, plastics, etc.) for all of Taiwan's consumption is processed in Taiwan's four refineries. Refineries are highly complex processing plants and generally require years to rebuild if damaged. As a result, these facilities are vulnerable targets.

Taiwan's electrical generation and distribution grid is also vulnerable. Generation plants are fairly dispersed, though none are hardened. Presumably, China would honor Article 56 of Protocol I or Article 15 of Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions and avoid attacking hydroelectric dams and nuclear power plants, enabling these facilities to continue



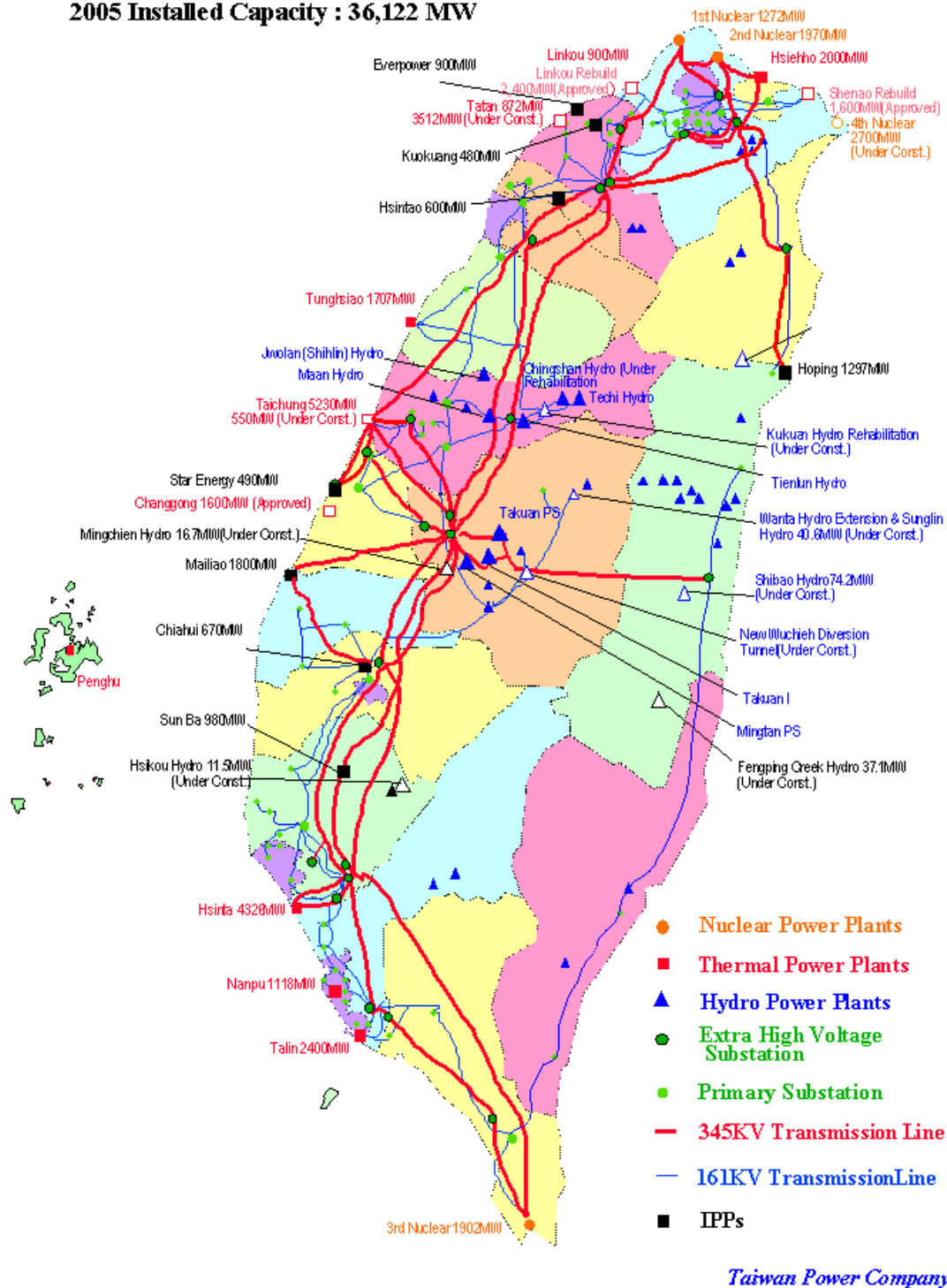
producing power<sup>26</sup>. However, an inspection of the Taiwanese power grid (Figure 2.) reveals a lack of redundancy and suggests several critical nodes, placing the distribution of electrical power at risk. Underscoring this vulnerability, a 1999 earthquake damaged several electrical substations and transmission towers, leaving nearly the entire island without electricity.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions: Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts* (8 June 1977). *Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions: Protection of Victims of non-International Armed Conflicts* (8 June 1977). <http://www.cicr.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/genevaconventions>

<sup>27</sup> Dong, Morrow, “Event Report: Chi-Chi, Taiwan Earthquake”, *RMS Publications* (2000), 10-11. [http://www.rms.com/Publications/Taiwan\\_Event.pdf](http://www.rms.com/Publications/Taiwan_Event.pdf).

**2005 Installed Capacity : 36,122 MW**



**Figure 2. Taiwan Power Generation and Distribution System<sup>28</sup>**

<sup>28</sup> Taiwan Power Company Website [http://www.taipower.com.tw/TaipowerWeb//upload/images/3/e\\_main\\_14.gif](http://www.taipower.com.tw/TaipowerWeb//upload/images/3/e_main_14.gif)

Taiwan's voice and data communication with other countries is primarily carried on six underwater fiber-optic cables. Many of the nearest nodes are located in the PRC and could be easily turned off. Additionally, these cables enter the water in Taiwan at three points making them susceptible to being severed via a missile, or by sabotage at land or sea. A disruption in any cable could have a significant effect as was demonstrated in the December 2006 earthquake in southern Taiwan causing internet blackouts and severe network congestion across Japan, China and Korea for up to two weeks.<sup>29</sup>

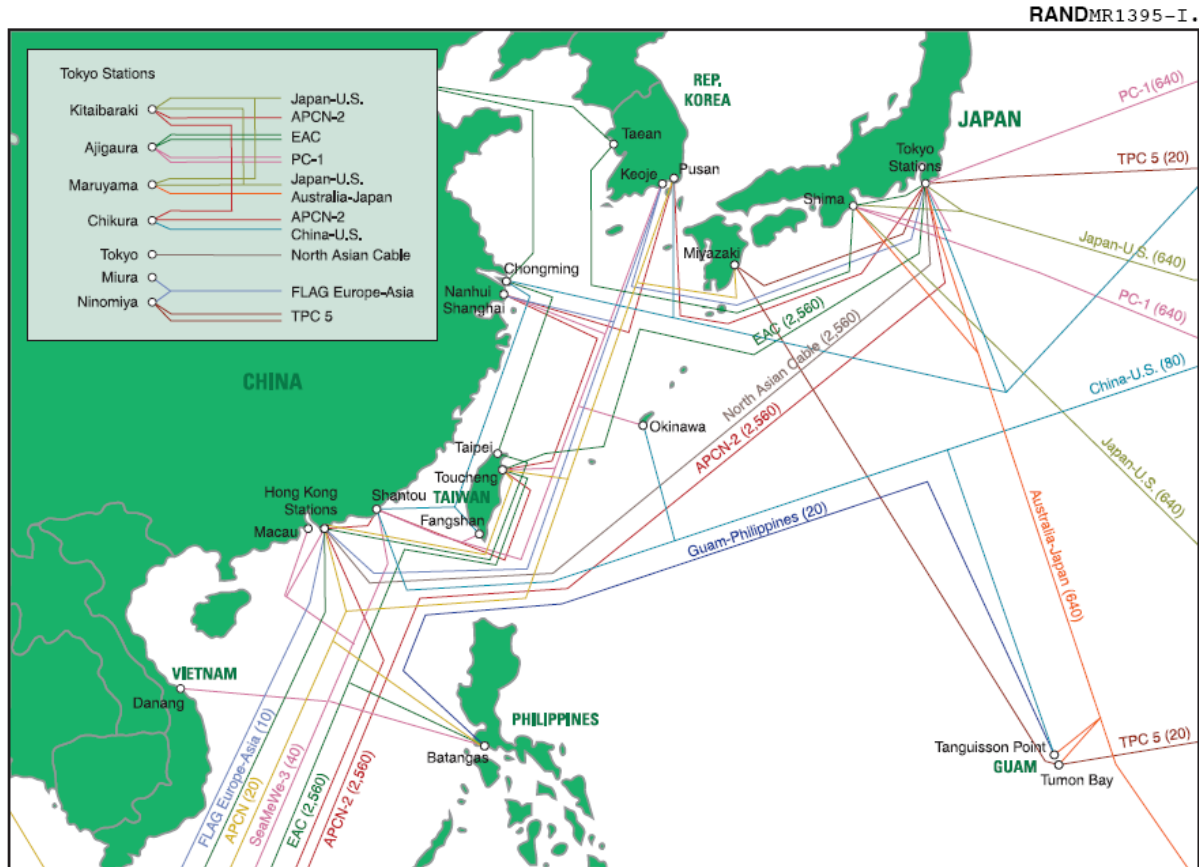
<u>Cable</u>	<u>Entry Point in Taiwan</u>	<u>Nearest Nodes</u>
APCN	Toucheng	Miyazaki, Japan / Batangas, Philippines
SEA-ME-WE-3	Toucheng and Fangshan	Shanghai, PRC/ Shantou, PRC
China-US	Fangshan	Shantou, PRC / Chongming, PRC
APCN 2	Tanshui	Batangas, Philippines / Chikura, Japan
EAC	Tanshui	Hong Kong / Qingao PRC / Shima, Japan

**Table 1. Submarine Fiber-optic Cables connecting with Taiwan (Oct. 2007)<sup>30</sup>**

As is evident in this analysis, Taiwan presents substantial critical vulnerabilities for China to target in a coercive campaign.

<sup>29</sup> Peter Enav. "Asia Slowly Recovers from Telecom Outage," *Washington Post Website*, (December 28, 2006). <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/12/28/AR2006122800459.html>

<sup>30</sup> International Cable Protection Committee Website. *Western Pacific and Far East Region Cable Data Table*, updated October 12, 2007. <http://www.iscpc.org/>



**Figure 3. Submarine Cables Terminating in Taiwan (2003)<sup>31</sup>**

### C. Coercive Campaign Scenario

Given Chinese doctrine for and the “Red Team” analysis of Taiwan’s critical vulnerabilities, the following vignette is offered as a plausible coercive campaign scenario.

#### *March 2008 - SITUATION:*

*Five days ago, voters in Taiwan passed the referendum proposed by President Chen seeking entry into the United Nations under the name of “Taiwan.” Chinese President Hu condemned the result of the referendum, stating that under Chen’s leadership, Taiwan has committed an intolerable “splittist” act.*

*Hours ago, Hu declared that Taiwan is a renegade province of China, and that Chinese forces will be used to resolve this “internal matter”. Hu announced a Total Exclusion Zone (TEZ) around Taiwan and directed all civilian aircraft and shipping to depart the area within 24 hours “for their safety”. He directed all Taiwanese military to return to and remain in garrison. Finally, Hu emphasized that this was an internal matter and that interference from outside powers would be considered a hostile act against China.*

*Intelligence reports indicate that China has moved air forces to forward bases in the Nanjing military region, placed anti-ship missile and short range ballistic missile units on*

<sup>31</sup> F. W. Lacroix, “A Concept of Operations for a New Deep-Diving Submarine”, “Appendix I, Submarine Cable Infrastructure,” *RAND Research Monograph* (2003), 149.

*alert, increased flights along the centerline of the Strait of Taiwan. Intelligence reports that a large number of submarines have left port – several of which were seen to be loading mines. Air defense radars are active along the Chinese coast. Surface ships, are patrolling the strait and its northern and southern entrance with their anti-ship and anti-air missiles ready.*

*The Director of the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) – the senior State Department official in Taiwan – reports that commercial air service to Taiwan has been discontinued, internet blackouts are occurring and there is widespread panic among US citizens and third country foreign nationals in Taiwan.*

*Taiwan has alerted its military and is moving its fighters into bunkers on the eastern side of the island. Chen has called the President of the US requesting assistance.*

#### **IV. Concept of Operations for a US response to a Chinese Coercive Campaign**

In the event US forces are directed to counter a Chinese coercive campaign of Taiwan, US national policy objectives would likely be to: Protect US Citizens, demonstrate US support for Taiwan, deter and de-escalate hostilities with China, and be ready to defend Taiwan and other allies in the event of a Chinese attack. The desired end-state would be a peaceful resolution of the status of Taiwan, or short of that, a return to the pre-crisis political and military status quo.

To support these interests and to achieve the desired end-state, the US should employ the instruments of national power in a coordinated effort. This paper will focus on the application of military power as a key component of the integrated US national effort.

As proposed above, the US strategy to counter a Chinese coercive campaign against Taiwan should have two components: Deterring escalation by preparing US forces to decisively counter any escalatory move by China with overwhelming force, and frustrating and exhausting China's efforts to isolate and coerce Taiwan by conducting multifaceted resistance operations.

##### **A. Deterring Escalation**

Key aspects of the operations to deter escalation include protecting US forces from potential Chinese long-range strikes, moving key combat and support forces into theater, intensifying reconnaissance operations and conducting information operations to ensure Chinese leaders are aware of these forces and understand circumstances under which the US would use these forces.

In addition to traditional military deterrence operations, a Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) for US citizens in Taiwan will probably be required. The NEO is included in the discussion of deterring escalation because of the strong message a NEO would send to the Chinese, and because it provides an excellent opportunity for the US to take the diplomatic initiative to establish agreements for the safe passage of evacuees, an effort which could then be followed with initiatives to de-escalate the overall crisis.

**Force Protection.** Over the past decade, China has accumulated a sizable arsenal of highly capable missiles, ships and aircraft that present a credible challenge to US forces operating in the Yellow Sea, East China Sea, South China Sea and in bases and ports in Japan, Korea. China may also be able to hold forces on Guam at risk using submarines and long-range air-launched cruise missiles. This build-up in off-shore strike capability is a key enabler to China's access-denial strategy.<sup>32</sup>

In the event of a cross-strait crisis, the risk of an attack on US forces may increase. In response to this increased threat, commanders would need to protect their forces by implementing additional defensive measures or by moving their forces to areas of lower risk. By protecting US forces, two benefits are achieved. First, by making it more difficult to

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<sup>32</sup> Office of the US Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress, Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2007*, 3.

attack a US military target, China is deterred from escalation. Second, US forces are preserved for future action.

**Movement of Forces into Theater.** To enable the US to counter an escalatory Chinese military action, US forces must be in position and ready to strike at a moment's notice. Forces routinely deployed in theater are trained and equipped to respond to such contingencies, but are limited in their ability to sustain high-tempo operations over time. Since a coercive campaign is likely to be protracted, additional forces will be required to sustain readiness over time. Additionally, specific combatants which are ideal for use in an anti-access environment, such as stealth aircraft and fast-attack submarines (SSNs) should be identified and brought into theater. Similarly, key support and logistics capabilities, such as airborne tankers, sealift and munitions re-supply ships, should also be brought into theater.

**Reconnaissance Operations.** Collection and analysis operations focused on China and Taiwan should intensify to provide commanders early indications and warning of possible escalatory moves, enabling forces to act in a timely manner. Additionally, intelligence products (released through appropriate channels) may be used to support diplomatic and public relations efforts.

**Information Operations.** The preparation of overwhelming US force capability will have no deterrent effect on Chinese leaders unless these leaders are aware of the capabilities of US forces and they understand the circumstances in which these forces would be employed. Information operations to accomplish this should occur at the national leadership level, via diplomatic channels and through military channels. Additionally, US commanders should consider conducting exercises, rehearsals, displays, press events and similar events that demonstrate capability and intent, and can be observed in China via their reconnaissance

efforts and through open sources. Special emphasis should be placed on developing the perception among Chinese leaders that the US holds the “trump card” to prevent them from achieving their aims by escalatory use of force.

**Noncombatant Evacuation Operation.** Lead responsibility for the “[p]rotection or evacuation of United States citizens and nationals abroad” is assigned to the Department of State with the Department of Defense and the Department of Health and Human Services assigned as supporting agencies.<sup>33</sup> In the event that a cross-strait crisis places US citizens in danger, the Director of the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), the senior US State Department official in Taiwan, will, in consultation with the Secretary of State, issue orders to conduct a drawdown or evacuation.<sup>34</sup> In the event that embassy personnel and US citizens and nationals can not be evacuated using commercial transportation, the State Department may charter transportation or request assistance from the Department of Defense to charter or provide lift capability. Direction for the military to conduct NEO operations will flow from the Secretary of Defense to US Pacific Command as the supported Geographical Combatant Commander and to US Transportation Command as the supporting commander.<sup>35</sup>

The conduct of a NEO in the context of a Chinese coercive campaign against Taiwan would be extremely challenging. The scope of such an evacuation is daunting. In addition to US efforts to evacuate its nationals, there is likely to be a race by other countries to evacuate their nationals, with the corresponding strain on resources within Taiwan and for ocean-going transportation. According to Taiwanese census statistics in 2000, there were 400,425 foreign nationals residing in Taiwan. The top seven foreign populations were: 9,261 from

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<sup>33</sup> *Assignment of National Emergency Preparedness Responsibilities, Executive Order 12656*, (18 November 1988). Federal Register, Vol. 53, No. 228, Section 1301 (1)(f). <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/EO12656.htm>

<sup>34</sup> Chairman, US Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Noncombatant Evacuation Operations*, Joint Publication (JP) 3-68, (Washington, DC: CJCS, 22 Jan 2007), IV 4-5.

<sup>35</sup> JP 3-68 *Noncombatant Evacuation Operations*, III 1-5.



the US, 11,487 from Japan, 143,484 from Thailand, 95,491 from Philippines, 74,302 from Indonesia, 25,959 from Vietnam, and 6,635 from Malaysia.<sup>36</sup> Seven years on from the census, and adding foreign nationals in Taiwan on tourist visas and undocumented workers, the number of evacuees could reach 75,000 US nationals and a total of 600,000 foreign nationals.

Making a NEO even more challenging, the operational environment on land, sea and air may be permissive, uncertain or hostile.<sup>37</sup> Every effort should be made to establish a diplomatic agreement with China and Taiwan, in concert with other concerned countries, to provide for the safety of evacuees, using the Geneva Convention as a legal basis. If direct diplomatic contacts are not possible, such agreements may be reached using the International Committee of the Red Cross as a go-between. Based on the conditions at the time of the NEO, appropriate forces will need to protect US citizen (and possibly other) evacuees and appropriate rules of engagement will need to be vetted through the Director, approved by Commander, US Pacific Command, and issued to the forces.

### **B. Active Resistance.**

Active resistance efforts to frustrate and exhaust Chinese efforts to isolate and coerce Taiwan and sustain the will of the Taiwanese people will be multi-faceted, complex and will require a coordinated effort that crosses all instruments of national and international power. Active resistance will be the focal point of coalition countries and international organizations to assist the people of Taiwan. Key aspects of the active resistance operations will include: The Active Resistance Task Force, humanitarian sustainment effort, intelligence and information operations.

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<sup>36</sup> Department of Interior, ROC, *Table 31 Nationality Distribution of Population by City/County at the End of December 2000*. <http://eng.stat.gov.tw/public/attachment/533301716471>.

<sup>37</sup> JP 3-68 *Noncombatant Evacuation Operations*, I-3.

**Active Resistance Task Force.** The scope and complexity of the Active Resistance operations will demand that a robust coordination cell be established including intelligence, planning, current operations and contracting capabilities. Participants in the cell should include assigned staff and liaison officers from the military, Coast Guard, State, Commerce, Maritime Administration (MARAD), Military Sealift Command, AIT Taipei, Taiwanese civil authorities, international coalition partners, IGOs, NGOs, representatives from shipping companies contracted to run the blockade, representatives from shipping insurance syndicates and representatives from private military contractors employed for protection of shipping activities and the intelligence communities.

The cell should be lead by a Navy or US Coast Guard Rear Admiral, but could also be lead by a senior office of the Department of State or Department of Commerce. The commander (or senior military officer) should be given Tactical Control (TACON) of military forces employed in Active Resistance operations and appropriate authorities should be granted to direct the movement of commercial and government controlled vessels as well as private military contractors supporting Active Resistance Operations.

Active Resistance will have two primary operational functions: Humanitarian sustainment effort, tactical intelligence and information operations.

**Humanitarian Sustainment.** Humanitarian sustainment will be the coordinated effort to supply the people of Taiwan with food, fuel and medical supplies as should be allowed under Protocol I of the Geneva Convention (Article 54, “Protection of Objects Indispensible to the Survival of the Civilian Population.”)<sup>38</sup>

The diplomatic effort to establish a program for humanitarian sustainment puts China on the horns of a dilemma. Either they agree to allow the shipment, which undermines their

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<sup>38</sup>*Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions: Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts* (8 June 1977).

coercion effort, or they refuse the shipments, in which case, they appear to the outside world as inhumane.

The complexity of humanitarian sustainment operations conducted by Active Resistance Task Force will depend whether the China agrees to allow humanitarian sustainment shipments to enter Taiwan or not. If such shipments are allowed, the operation will focus on coordination of shipments to ensure they are not targeted in error.

If China does not agree to allow shipments, the Active Resistance Task Force would be charged with coordinating a blockade-running operation for these essential supplies.

**Intelligence.** Active Resistance operations would include the collection, analysis and exploitation of tactical-level intelligence. Intelligence regarding the flow of sustainment supplies, conditions on the Island and identified supply needs would also be provided to appropriate authorities

**Information Operations.** Active Resistance efforts will be photographed and documented extensively, including the use of embedded journalists, press releases, web-pages, blogs, etc. to support themes of the humanitarian suffering caused by the Chinese blockade and American support for the people of Taiwan for audiences in Taiwan, US, China and around the world.

## **V. Conclusion**

Rising tensions across the Taiwan Strait fueled by Chen's activism, Hu's fear of the consequences of "losing" Taiwan and China's growing military might have increased the likelihood that China would use force in a cross-strait crisis. Furthermore, it appears that a Chinese coercive campaign against Taiwan is the most likely "next step" if Chinese diplomatic efforts and military demonstrations fail to stop Taiwan's move toward independence.

The study of Chinese doctrine and Taiwan's critical vulnerabilities suggests that if the US intervenes to counter a Chinese coercive campaign against Taiwan, it should adopt a two-pronged military strategy of deterring escalation and active resistance.

## **VI. Recommendations**

Based on the study presented in this paper, the following recommendations are offered:

**A. US Military Planning.** The US should conduct deliberate planning on countering a coercive campaign on Taiwan. This planning should include preliminary coordination of the Active Resistance Task Force, including consultation with all agencies, nations organizations and companies which may participate. Once completed, the plan should be exercised in appropriate command post and field exercises.

**B. Strengthen Taiwan's Defenses.** The US should encourage Taiwan to take action to reduce its exposure to the critical vulnerabilities identified, establish a secure and reliable communication system with the US for use in crisis action coordination, develop and exercise plans for protection of ports against blockade scenarios and take measures to ensure its merchant marine is prepared to and obligated to operate in blockade-running scenarios. These initiatives are in concert with the existing US policy encouraging a "strong and moderate" Taiwan.<sup>39</sup>

**C. Merchant Ship Passive Countermeasures.** Establish contracts with Private Military Contractors to build maintain and operate container-sized kits of passive countermeasure equipment to "harden" a merchant ship against attack by torpedoes and missiles. Such equipment could include chaff, visual and radio-frequency obscurant aerosol

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<sup>39</sup> Thomas J. Christensen, Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. "A Strong and Moderate Taiwan", (Speech to US-Taiwan Business Council, Defense Industry Conference, Annapolis, MD, 11 September 2007.) <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2007/91979.htm>

generators, counter-missile jammers, towed torpedo countermeasures and static and dynamic torpedo countermeasures.

D. **Vessel Survey.** Conduct a market survey of US and foreign flag vessels that operate in the Western Pacific that have characteristics useful to NEO and/or blockade running operations. Establish conditional agreements with owners and operating companies to facilitate contracting in the event of a crisis. Where appropriate, pay for the modification of the vessels to support military use under provisions of the Jones Act.

E. **Insurance Market Survey.** Conduct market surveys of shipping insurance syndicates. Determine strategies for purchasing private insurance for vessels under hire by the US Government in war zones.

F. **Fuel Blivets and Dracones.** Create a reserve stock of fuel blivets sized to fit in the hold of Taiwanese fishing vessels (approx 1000 gal)<sup>40</sup> and fuel dracones (approx 5000 gal)<sup>41</sup> that can be towed by fishing and utility vessels in blockade-running scenarios.

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<sup>40</sup> See [http://www.interstateproducts.com/pillow\\_tanks.htm](http://www.interstateproducts.com/pillow_tanks.htm) 1000 gal size

<sup>41</sup> See <http://www.universalrope.com/draconechart.pdf>, Size D5

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